228 The Bahrain Government has tried hard to encourage the diving
656 industry, by the remittance of the registration fees on diving boats,
178 by customs concessions and by other means, but it is certain that the industry will never return to its palmy days when so many of the people of Bahrain were connected with it or depended on it.

228 Visitors to the pearl banks are advised to set out at about midnight
431 from Bahrain. Launches can be hired in Manama or Muharraq and
609 if they leave at twelve midnight, the banks will be reached at two or three in the morning. The remainder of the night can be spent lying at anchor and in the early morning the opening of the shells can be watched, followed by the preparations for the day's work and the actual diving. The divers have no objection to being photographed at their work and welcome foreigners on board their boats, they do, however, appreciate a present from visitors and it is a good plan to take out some fresh dates or other fruit, for the boats, particularly at the end of the season, are usually low in fresh provisions and such a gift is very welcome.

CHAPTER VII

LOCAL INDUSTRIES

THE POTTERIES

323 PEARLING is not the only ancient industry in Bahrain, for the presence
[438] in many parts of the islands of pottery sherds indicates that pottery has been made here for many centuries. Today this industry is restricted to the village of Aali whose inhabitants work in the same way as did their forefathers, scorning modern innovations.

● [472] From the hills around Rifaa the clay is brought to Aali ; brown and red clay for the coarser objects and white clay for finer work. The raw clay is beaten and then mixed with water until it is ready for throwing by the younger members of the potter's family, for each pottery is a separate family concern. All the processes which go into the making of pottery take place in small sheds, in each one a potter can be seen at work, his feet in a pit working the wheel which is on a level with his waist. Rapidly he flings lumps of clay on to the spinning wheel and with deft fingers works the shapeless mud into graceful jars, bowls and other utensils. When each piece is completed it is set in the sun to dry before being taken to the oven. Most of the ovens
[172] are built in the prehistoric tumuli south of the village, which have been excavated. A hole is made in the roof of the tomb and another at the side; in the former the objects to be baked are placed and the latter is filled with firewood. When the fires are lit the tombs become miniature volcanoes with thick smoke belching from their peaks, slowly the fires die down, the smoke clears and the baked pottery is removed and the ovens are prepared for the next baking.